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ABSTRACT

This is a report of the tutorial and counseling support programs initiated by the Center for Urban Affairs and Equal Opportunity Programs at Michigan State University during the 1969-70 academic year. The report discusses: (1) the objectives of the program which included improving the student's self-image; (2) the organizational structure of the program's staff which consisted of an education specialist, head counselors, counselors, tutor coordinators, and tutors; (3) the tutorial procedures; and (4) the results of the program. One hundred and eighteen students were tutored in the fall term and 64 in the spring term; 15 were counseled and 5 received both tutoring and counseling. Eighty-two of the students responded to an attitude survey that elicited information on demographic characteristics, perceptions of self and the university, and expectations and results of tutorial program and tutor-tutee relationship. Information was also obtained on their gradepoint averages. The results indicated that a majority of the students believed they had received assistance from the tutorial program; and the students on the average had made substantial gains in their academic achievement. (AF)

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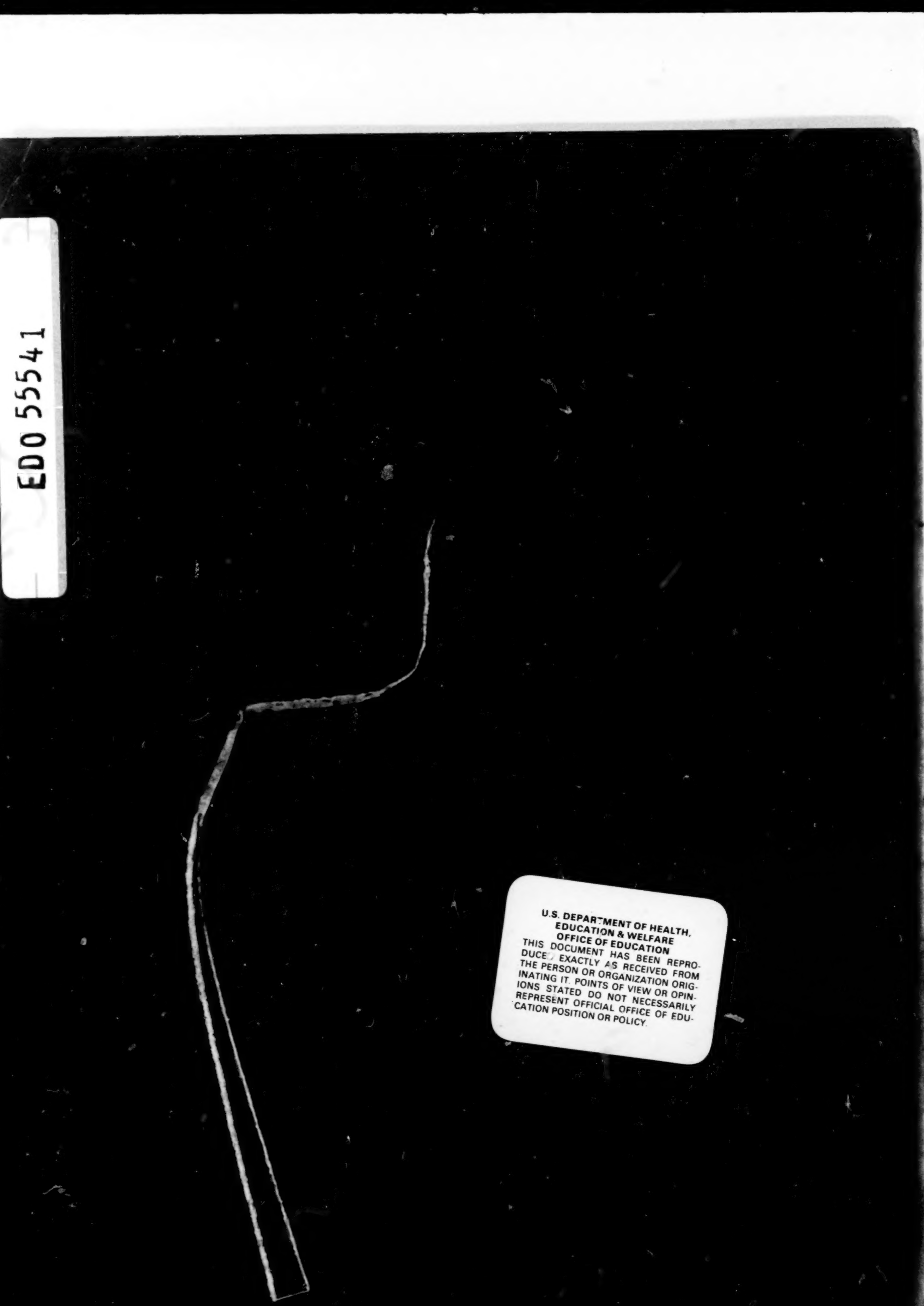

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ANALYSIS OF THE 1969-1970 ACADEMIC TUTORIAL PROGRAM AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Center for Urban Affairs
in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Program

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ANALYSIS OF THE 1969-1970 ACADEMIC TUTORIAL PROGRAM AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Prepared by Donald S. Biskin

Universities have dual responsibility in providing educational opportunity for educationally disadvantaged high risk students. They must actively recruit significant numbers of high risk students and then ensure that these students receive the support they need to complete their degree requirements.

The following is a report of tutorial and counseling support programs initiated by the Center for Urban Affairs (CUA) and Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP) at Michigan State University during the 1969-70 academic year.

Initial tutoring efforts for minority students began winter term 1969. Fifty-seven students received assistance in six academic areas: American Thought and Language, natural science, chemistry, trigonometry, and Russian. During spring quarter 1969, an additional forty-four students requested and received assistance in American Thought and Language and natural science. No systematic analysis was conducted to determine the effectiveness of this initial effort. With the growth of CUA and EOP, however, the decision was made to continue this program and concurrently evaluate its effectiveness.

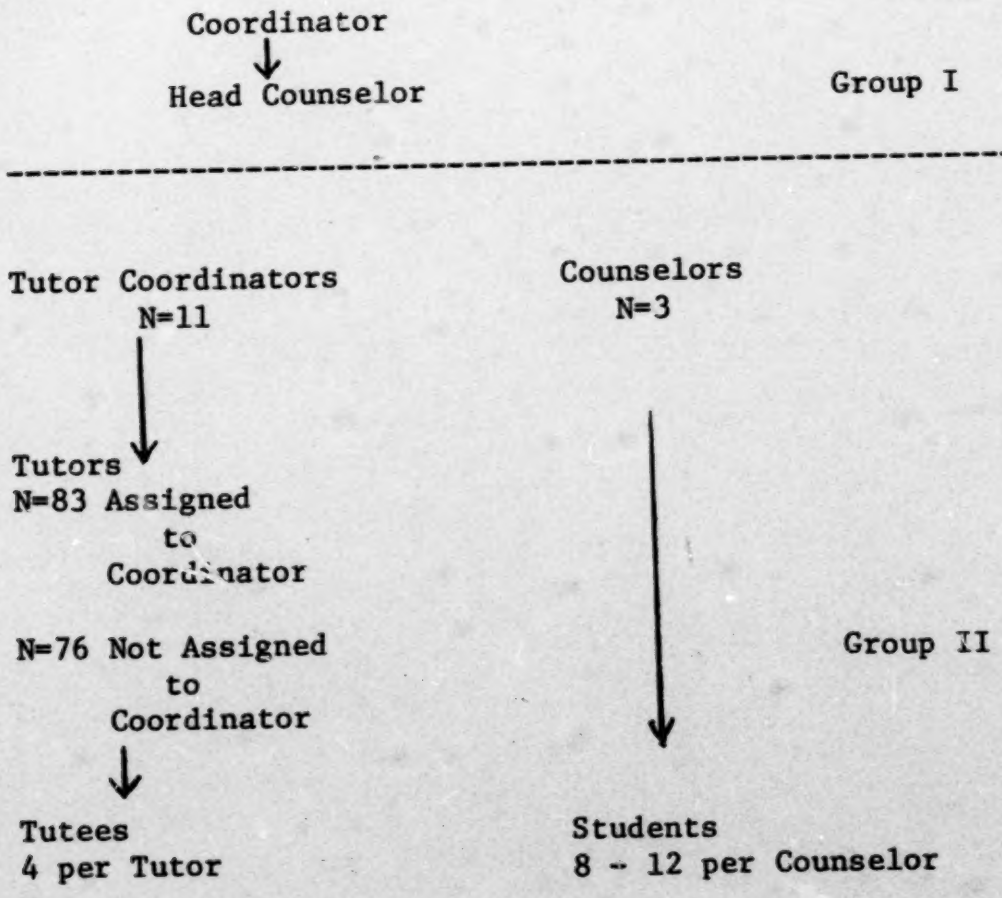
The basic objectives of the program were categorized into cognitive and affective dimensions. The former was operationalized in terms of individual assistance in specific curriculum areas: chemistry, natural science, American Thought and Language, psychology, business, reading, math, history, and social science. The affective objective was to

improve the students' self-image. Tutors and counselors participated in a pre-training program designed specifically to prepare them to meet the latter objective.

During summer term 1969, the tutorial staff decided that initial academic support would be offered to all minority students who needed such assistance. Additional criteria for admission to the program were established by some subject matter groups.

The program was described in a letter sent to all black students planning to enter MSU fall quarter 1969. The student was to indicate his willingness to participate in the tutoring-counseling program by mailing a return post card to the tutorial staff.

The organizational structure of the program's staff was as follows:



Group I staff was salaried while the Group II staff was made up of volunteers. Their services were solicited through departmental bulletins, the counseling center, and newspaper articles. The specific responsibilities of each staff member were to:

Education Specialist for Counseling/Tutorial Services:

1. be responsible to the students, the Equal Opportunity Program, and Michigan State University for the successful operation of the program.
2. direct the program.
3. work toward the program objectives.

Head Counselors:

1. be responsible to the program coordinator.
2. coordinate counseling service for his assigned group.
3. make certain all counselors assigned to him fulfilled their role in a manner consistent with the best interest of students.
4. see that each student was registered.
5. make sure each student knew the requirements for his degree program.
6. make sure each student received proper academic advising.
7. keep communication open to all concerned.
8. coordinate reports filed by the counselors and to submit a copy to the coordinator with recommendations.

Counselors:

1. be accountable to the head counselor for needed services.
2. be responsible at all times for decisions each made.
3. file a written report of students' progress to the head counselor each week.
4. contact each professor with a student in the program, making sure that student and professor understand each other's perception of progress being made.

Tutor-Coordinators:

1. be accountable to the head counselor for needed services.
2. be responsible for tutors carrying out their duties in the program.
3. make sure tutors are used and placed according to their ability and the students' needs.
4. file a weekly progress report, along with recommendations.
5. make sure tutors are available when needed by students.

Tutors:

1. be accountable to the tutor-coordinator.
2. improve the ability of each student to handle skills pertinent to almost all learning.
3. help each student improve his self-image and self-confidence.
4. widen the horizons of each student through new varied exposures and relationships.
5. gain rapport with students.
6. value students' opinion.
7. file a written report of each student's progress with recommendations to the tutor-coordinator.

The only staff that received special pre-service training were the tutors. They underwent a five-week training program which included empathy training, sensitivity discussions, and role-playing sessions. The objective of these sessions was to prepare the tutors to deal with interpersonal problems that could either terminate the tutoring and/or render it useless.

The coordinator and head counselor's roles were basically administrative and are appropriately reflected in the organizational chart. However, the success or failure of the program, in terms of

increased achievement was a function of what the tutors and counselors did. Consequently, a description of the work responsibilities and limitations imposed on them is necessary. Their responsibilities were both pedagogical and administrative. Included in the former were communicating and/or reviewing with the student ways to approach course work, study textbooks, take lecture notes, prepare for exams, and utilize library resources. The tutor was also responsible for discovering what was of prime importance in the course, what the professor was specifically looking for, and the kinds of tests he gave. In conjunction with these activities, the tutor and student were encouraged to discuss the material being covered with the professor. (It was essential that the tutor be aware of what was being covered.)

The tutor also provided feedback to the student on his progress and achievement in terms of practice tests and reactions to his comments.

The tutorial procedures were as follows: each tutor met for one and one-half hours two times a week with his students. In addition, he made one follow-up phone call to check on the student's progress. Each tutorial session was based on a short lesson plan developed by the tutor.

The first three sessions of the program were structured the same for all tutors. The first session was unstructured and employed a problem-question approach. Specific questions and problems raised by the students were answered. The latter two sessions were to act as models for the remaining sessions. For the second meeting the tutor prepared and presented the relevant course material. The third session involved student presentations. Each student was assigned a topic and required to present it to the group. During the remainder of

the term, the first session of the week was structured on a tutor presentation model, while the second meeting employed the student presentation approach.

Included among the tutor's administrative responsibilities were checking on his students' class attendance, actual course progress and assignments.

Specific restrictions were placed upon the tutors. To ensure the overall success of the program tutors were not to solve homework problems for the student, were to confine instruction to areas of competence, and they were to refrain from counseling.

No formal program was established for the counselors until winter quarter 1970. Students were either referred to or voluntarily visited counselors when problems arose.

RESULTS

There were 102 freshmen and sixteen sophomores who received tutoring fall term. During winter term 50 freshmen and fourteen sophomores were tutored, while one freshman and fourteen sophomores were counseled and three freshmen and two sophomores received both tutoring and counseling.

Two criteria were employed in the evaluation of the program: student attitudes as measured by a questionnaire specifically constructed for the evaluation and academic achievement as operationalized by grade point average (GPA).

Student Attitude Survey Results

Of the students involved in the tutorial and counseling program, 86 responded to the student attitude survey. The survey was developed

to gain information on the students' family background, their perceptions of self and the university, expectations of the tutorial program, results they received from the program, race and sex variables, and the influence of the tutors. The results are as follows.

Demographic Information

Ninety-seven percent of the students engaged in the program reported that they were black, and 96 percent of all girls were black. The remainder of the students identified themselves as white. The majority of the students reported that they came from small to average-size families (3 - 5 persons). Most students (51.2%) stated that their mothers did not work, that their fathers were laborers or skilled workers (64.3%), and earned less than $10,000 (56.5%) annually.

The tutors were 80 percent males, while twenty percent were females; 72 percent of the tutors were white, while 28 percent were black.

Perceptions of Self and University

An overwhelming majority of students (70.6%) stated that minority students had special problems. A majority (58.8%) also believed that a minority student was disadvantaged. Thirty-five percent of the students thought that college should be preparing them to succeed in the general society. When asked to describe their college experience in one word, however, 45.9 percent responded with a negative word while

32.9 percent expressed a positive statement. In addition, 33 percent of the students stated that disgust and alienation combined to cause a student to drop out of college. A combination of responses concerning poor motivation and financial problems accounted for another 33 percent.

Most students in the program blamed either the student (25.9%) or the instructor (24.7%) when failure occurred.

Expectation and Results of Tutorial Program and Tutor-Tutee Relationships

Thirty-five percent of the students said that they heard about the program from a friend, while 20 percent received the information from a pamphlet, and 16.5 percent from a friend who had a tutor.

A plurality (40.5%) of the students expected the tutor to discuss relevant course material, while 20 percent looked for assistance in study skills. In a similar vein, 43 percent said they had expected to talk exclusively about course work. Forty-one percent had actually talked only about course work, while 32 percent responded that they had talked about course work combined with some social conversation.

Most students (64.4%) expected gradual improvement in courses. Thirty-seven percent of the students believed that the tutor had helped very much and 34.1 percent said that they were occasionally assisted. Fifteen percent believed the tutor had tried and failed and only 4.7 percent expressed that they had rarely benefited.

A majority of the students (77.6%) said that they expected to meet the tutor whenever they wanted to see him. This expectation was realized as a large plurality (46.4%) reported meeting the tutor when they initiated the session.

Fifty percent of the students reported that the tutor was concerned about them as a person.

No student felt that their tutor considered them too retarded for college work. Sixty-two percent of the students said that they had expected a black tutor. Thirty-five percent expected a male tutor and 32 percent expected the tutor to be between the ages of 20-23 years old. Thirty-nine percent of the students stated that the difference in color (between student and tutor) did not affect the relationship at all, and only one percent stated it bothered them very much.

Sex Differences

A number of sex differences were observed. Only differences of a large degree will be reported. More men (45%) than women (19.0%) said that they saw hard work as the key to college success. Women (12.7% vs. 0.0% for men) placed a higher value on knowing somebody. More women (36.5%) than men (22.7%) expressed a positive view toward college. Fewer women (27%) than men (50%) stated that disgust and alienation were the causes of dropping out of school. More men (45.5%) than women (31.7%) stated that they heard of the program from a friend, while 23.8 percent of the women and only 9.1 percent of the men stated that they had first heard of the program from a pamphlet. More women (74.6%) than men (54.4%) expected gradual improvement while 27.2 percent of the men and 11.1 percent of the women thought improvement would be immediate.

Student Achievement Data

Grade point averages were compared for 384 freshmen and 249 sophmores. Of the 384 freshmen, 282 were not tutored fall term. Their grade point

average (GPA) increased from 2.13 for fall term to 2.23 for winter. The 102 freshmen, who were tutored had an average GPA of 1.82 fall term and 2.24 winter term. This was a relative increase of .39 as compared to .10 for the not tutored group. (See Table I)

TABLE I

FALL AND WINTER GPA OF RESHMEN TUTORED FALL 1969

	Fall GPA	Winter GPA
Not Tutored	2.13	2.23
Tutored	1.85	2.24

Fifty freshmen students were tutored winter term. Their fall term GPA increased from 1.81 to 2.15 for winter term. Those students who were not tutored showed only a .14 increase from fall to winter as contrasted to a .34 increase for the tutored group.

Only one freshman student was counseled winter term. His grade point average increased from 1.45 to 2.64 for winter, a relative increase of 1.19. Three students were both counseled and tutored. Their average increased from 1.61 to 2.71, a gain of 1.10 for the same period of time. (See Table II)

TABLE II

FALL AND WINTER GPAS OF FRESHMEN TUTORED AND/OR COUNSELED WINTER 1970

	Fall GPA	Winter GPA
Not Tutored or counseled	2.10	2.24
Tutored only	1.81	2.15
Counseled only	1.45	2.64
Tutored and counseled	1.61	2.71

Sixteen sophomores were tutored fall term. There was no meaningful difference between their fall and winter GPAs. (See Table III)

TABLE III

FALL AND WINTER GPAS OF SOPHOMORES TUTORED FALL 1969

	Fall GPA	Winter GPA
Not tutored	2.16	2.33
Tutored	2.09	2.05

However, there was a relative gain of .23 from fall to winter for those sophomores tutored winter term. This compared to an increase of

.16 for those who were not tutored. The fourteen sophomores counseled winter term gained .61 while those who were tutored and counseled increased .11. (See Table IV)

TABLE IV

FALL AND WINTER GPAS OF SOPHOMORES TUTORED AND/OR COUNSELED WINTER 1970

	Fall GPA	Winter GPA
Not tutored or counseled	2.19	2.30
Tutored only	1.88	2.11
Counseled only	2.03	2.64
Tutored and counseled	2.25	2.36

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results point to two conclusions:

a) A majority of students believed they had received assistance from the tutorial program; and

b) The students on the average, especially freshmen, had made substantial gains in their academic achievement.

The results become even more significant when one considers the relative approach assumed by the tutorial program. There is no doubt that with more systematic attempts, those students who seek tutoring could

rise to a higher level of academic achievement.

On the basis of the procedure and results of the 1969-70 tutorial program a number of recommendations must be made.

1) It is necessary for the university's central administration to assume financial responsibility for the tutorial program. Resources can be delegated in a number of ways, but no matter what the vehicle, specific monies must be set aside.
2) The content of the tutorial program must be developed in a systematic way by subject matter and curriculum specialists, administrators, counselors, and students. The program must be founded on proven and well thought-out instructional and content principles.
3) Recruitment efforts, both formal and informal, must be improved. Notification and description of the tutorial program must be made available to all students. Grass roots recruitment must also be more structured.
4) The results indicate that tutoring has a greater effect on freshmen. This points to the fact that tutorial programs must be aimed at students soon after they arrive on campus. If initial programs are not available, academic failure may soon follow.
5) There must also be better methods of keeping students in tutorial programs. The data reveals high attrition. The establishment of some form of contractual agreement with the student might be desirable.
6) It is necessary to build evaluation strategies into the program. If such atrategies do not exist from the onset, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to determine the program's success

or failure. There must also be constant evaluation of course content and instructional strategies in relation to students' needs and characteristics.

7) Differential recruitment and programs for men and women are recommended. The results indicate a number of meaningful sex differences that could affect student success. These differences must be taken into account when developing the tutorial program.